

**Testimony of Steven Manicastro
Before the Energy and Technology Committee**

*In Support of **SB570, An Act Concerning Electric Savings and Fixed Bill Fees**, and related bills capping the fixed charge for customers of electric distribution companies.*

Submitted by Steven Manicastro, Uconn Graduate Employee Union, UAW Local 6950

February 24, 2015

Senator Paul Doyle, Representative Lonnie Reed, and distinguished members of the committee:

I am writing to support passage of legislation that would lower and cap the fixed charge for electric service for residential customers at \$10 per month. Connecticut's residential customers currently pay some of the highest monthly fixed charges of any major electric utility in the region and the recent increase in the fixed charge by Eversource (formerly known as CL&P) represents a step in the wrong direction for Connecticut's economy and environment. High fixed rates are problematic for two basic reasons: 1) they are unfair and regressive, and 2) they exacerbate the problem of climate change by removing the economic incentive for consumers to conserve energy.

Fixed charges function like a flat tax which disproportionately hurts the most economically vulnerable residents of CT. Earning less than \$20,000 per year on average, my fellow graduate employees and me are among the low wage workers who really feel the squeeze when utility bills increase. We are also scientists and social scientists who understand the consequences of failing to confront climate change. By increasing the fixed portion of the utility bill, Eversource has reduced the ability of customers to reap the financial benefits of conserving energy, thus disincentivizing the type of consumer behavior that is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Conversely, reducing and capping the fixed rate gives the consumer a larger variable component of their bill, which puts the economic interests of consumers in line with the general interests of the environment—less energy use. For each of these reasons, I urge you to please act on SB570 and support legislation to reduce and cap the fixed electric rate.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Steven Manicastro
22 Hewitt St.
Willimantic, Ct 06226
732-762 4800
smanicastro@gmail.com